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U.S. in dark on Israeli spying, senator says

By Bill Gertz
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U.S. officials currently do not have enough information to determine the extent of Israeli spying in the United States, according to Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman David Durenberger.

"What we know today that we didn't know a year ago is that we need more information," the Minnesota Republican told reporters at a National Press Club meeting yesterday. "In other words, we're not taking people's word for the fact that nothing is going on."

Justice and State Department officials have clashed recently over whether the spy case of Jonathan Jay Pollard was an isolated incident or part of a much larger Israeli spying operation against the United States. The two departments also differ on whether Israeli officials fully cooperated in the probe.

Pollard was arrested Nov. 21 and pleaded guilty last week to spying for Israel, along with his wife Anne Henderson-Pollard, under a plea bargain that could earn the couple reduced prison terms in exchange

for cooperating in an ongoing investigation of the case. Four Israeli officials also were named as conspirators in a federal grand jury indictment June 4.

State Department officials said Monday there is no evidence of further Israeli spying, but Justice Department and FBI officials have said more indictments of Israeli spies were expected.

White House spokesman Larry Speakes yesterday defended the State Department statement, saying it did not contradict the Justice Department's position.

"I don't think they [Justice officials] differed from it except to say they hadn't approved it," Mr. Speakes said. "We stand exactly by what the State Department said yesterday."

State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb would not comment further on the issue when asked yesterday if he had misstated the administration's position on the Pollard case.

Mr. Durenberger, whose committee oversees FBI intelligence operations as well as the CIA and other federal spy agencies, said

his committee was not conducting an investigation of the Pollard case outside of the U.S. intelligence community.

"This is an ongoing process," Mr. Durenberger said. "We have not reached any conclusions... as to Israeli involvement, the nature of it or the breadth of it."

He took issue with reports indicating that the Israelis were conducting "large-scale" intelligence operations in the United States, saying, "I don't think you can arrive at that conclusion on the basis of where the investigation is today."

Israel signed an agreement with the United States outlining what intelligence operations are permissible, he said.

"We have agreements, and we test them out periodically and make sure that they are holding water and that they're not leaking," Mr. Durenberger said. "And in this case, obviously there was a little leak in one of the liaison bureau's relationships."

Mr. Durenberger said that by cutting President Reagan's defense spending request below \$295 billion, U.S. intelligence "will probably lose an ear." If the House level of \$283

billion is passed, intelligence agencies would lose "an ear and a half," he said. Intelligence funding is hidden within the Defense Department budget.

Under a new long-term strategy for the intelligence community, the committee no longer "micro-manages" budgeting for intelligence programs, he said.

"In other words, we don't just talk a collection platform here, you're going to lose a station there," Mr. Durenberger said. "We talk now about losing a capacity to learn this kind of information in that kind of time frame from that kind of source — so it is literally like losing an ear if we in intelligence have to make the same proportionate cuts as the rest of the Defense Department."

Several senators, he said, have been urging members of the Armed Services Committee to exempt the intelligence community from any cuts in defense spending.

In a speech earlier, Mr. Durenberger compared 1985, dubbed "The Year of the Spy," with 1986, which he said "is well on its way to being remembered as 'The Year of the Leak.'"